

a community called ...

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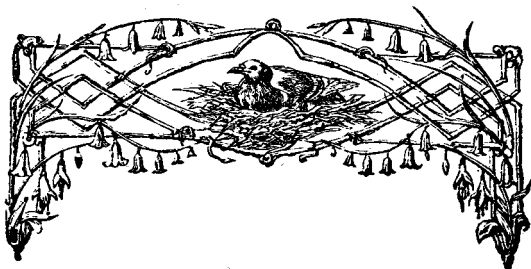
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THE GUIDE.

IN some countries, when a traveler has occasion to pass through an intricate forest, to cross a mountain, or traverse a plain where the paths are not easily discovered, he takes care to provide himself with a guide. This guide is a man who has by long habit made himself well acquainted with the way; one whose knowledge enables him to avoid the dangerous places—who knows where shelter may be obtained if a storm should come on, and who

can at the same time point out every object worthy of notice.

Were the traveler rash enough to proceed without taking this precaution, he might reasonably expect to meet with some disaster, even if he should escape with life. If, likewise, after having engaged a guide, he were to act in direct opposition to his advice, he might very probably suffer for his self-will.

Two young men were once journeying together over the Alps. They were alike interested in the pursuit of some object which had attracted their attention, when suddenly, and somewhat unceremoniously, they were bidden by the guide to follow him. The elder of the two, though unacquainted with the cause for alarm, trusted to the judgment of his conductor, and by his means reached a place of safety just as a heavy cloud, laden with electric fluid, burst over the spot he had quitted. His companion, however, refused to accompany him, because he did not see the danger, and was killed, thus falling a victim to his presumption and self-sufficiency.

Reader, you are a traveler through this world, and you stand as much in need of a guide as he who journeys through the forest, over the mountains, or in the pathless desert. You are placed on a spot where there is much that is beautiful to attract the eye, to please the ear, and to furnish the mind with materials for thought.

But the light of nature is not a guide to heaven.

The book of providence will in most instances shadow forth the directing hand which moves unseen in all the affairs of men. But the book of providence cannot teach you how you may attain everlasting life.

Conscience, that "inner self" which whispers to the soul, giving its verdict on every thought, word, and action, will in many cases point out the path you ought to follow. It will say, "This is the way, walk ye in it." Or when you have swerved from the straight line of duty, it will thunder forth its terrors. But this is all it can do. It cannot reveal a way whereby reparation can be made for past

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offenses. It cannot expiate, though it may condemn. The light of conscience is not, therefore, a sufficient guide.

But because neither nature, providence, nor conscience can conduct you safely to eternal bliss, God has provided a sure and unerring guide. This is his revealed word—the Bible, applied by the Holy Spirit. Whatever may be your age, sex, or condition in life—whether you are ignorant or schooled in the learning of this world, it is alike your highest privilege, as well as your imperative duty, to consult this guide. Without it you will be exposed to dangers far more terrific than those which lurk in the forest or meet you in the desert. Without it life will be to you a maze, full of doubt and perplexity, and death (to quote the dying words of a celebrated infidel) “a leap in the dark.”

The traveler's guide spoken of may fail in performing the task he undertakes. He may occasionally err in judgment, and consequently lead those who confide in him into the very dangers he professes to be able to avoid.

Others may be treacherous to their trust. This is not an uncommon occurrence. Guides have been sometimes leagued with banditti, and have decoyed their unsuspecting victims into murderous hands. The Bible is, however, an infallible guide. It was never yet known to mislead any who sought its direction, by the aid of the Holy Spirit, with a real sincerity, and in a really humble and teachable spirit. It is a faithful guide, because it proceeds from the Spring of goodness as well as knowledge. Your confidence in it may therefore be unbounded.

In the "Pilgrim's Progress," Christian meets, in the first stage of his journey, with Evangelist, who represents the word of God. He it was who pointed out to him the way to the cross. Divine illumination may come through the medium of a book, a sermon, or the conversation of pious persons; but it always springs from the same source. Ask the Christian writer whence he derives the elevated morals which adorn his pages, and he will answer, "From the Bible." Ask the

faithful preacher whence he is furnished with topics which bear on the interests of all ages and all conditions of men, and he will reply, "From the Bible." Turn to the Christian portion of society, and inquire what is the spring of their joys, consolations, and hopes; ask them whither they fly when in affliction, whence they seek strength to resist temptation, and where they gain a true knowledge of themselves and of God; they too will answer, "From the Bible."

The Bible, with the aid of the Holy Spirit, is the only unerring guide on earth.

The young man of whom mention has been made lost his life through a disregard of the warning and counsel of his guide. But you, reader, are endangering your immortal soul if you are neglecting the warnings and counsels contained in the word of God.

There is no excuse in this land for any one, however poor, being without a Bible, and awful are the responsibilities of those who have this privilege and prize it not. When Bibles were so scarce that they were chained in the chancels

of the churches, people would walk several miles to read or hear a few pages from them. Many of the martyrs shed their blood, or perished at the stake, for no other crime than that of possessing a Bible, and making its contents the rule of their faith, and the guide of their lives. We are not subjected to these dangers; there are now no prison bars to inclose, nor fagots kindled to burn, the readers of the word of God; but, alas! there is an eternal prison-house, and there are everlasting burnings, for those who refuse to read or obey it. It is not a light matter to disregard the advice given by this heavenly guide.

This question, then, we desire seriously and kindly to put to every reader of this little tract, "Do you wish to have a guide?"

The Bible abounds with invitations and promises of mercy and love, whereby to draw wandering and perishing sinners to flee from ruin and to lay hold of eternal life; by the grace of the Holy Spirit to repent and believe the Gospel of the grace of God in Christ Jesus.

Hearken to this Gospel, and you will share
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in its infinite joys. "Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. I will instruct thee and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go: I will guide thee with mine eye." Psa. xxxii, 1, 8. "Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth." Isa. xlv, 22. "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." John iii, 16.



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